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B. C. STUDIES

The Politics of a Derelict

by

Harold E. Winch

M.I.A.



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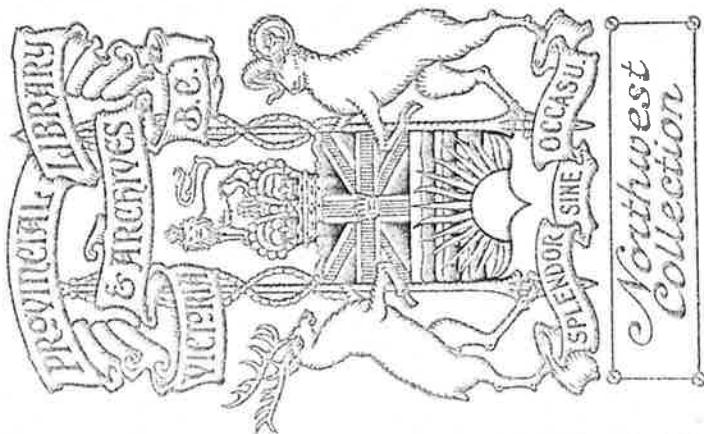
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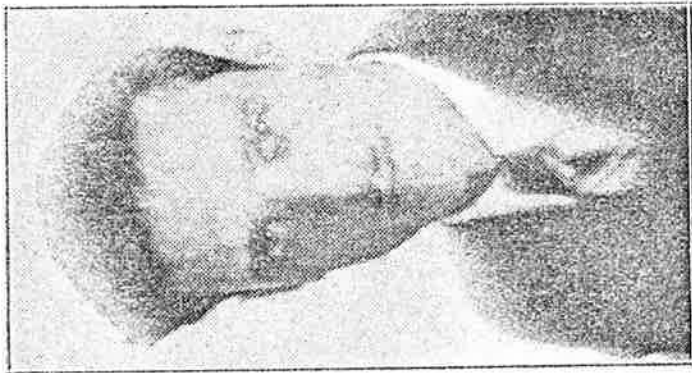
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Harold E. Winsch

County
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FORWARD

This pamphlet is a true copy of my maiden speech as it was delivered in the B.C. Legislature on March 5th. Some may wonder at the title under which it is printed—"The Politics of a Derelict." Some months ago Mr. R. B. Bennett, Premier of Canada, is reported as saying that the Government was not going to act as a "wet-nurse" to every "derelict" in Canada. We take it that he refers to the unemployed. I, therefore, come under the heading of a "derelict," as I was unemployed for a period of three years, and spent nineteen months on Direct Relief. I would in all probability have been there yet if the electors of Vancouver East had not seen fit to remove me from the broad line by electing me, a 26-year-old "derelict," to the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. I therefore am calling this, my maiden speech in that Hall of Fame, "The Politics of a Derelict"; and I trust that you will find it educational and instructive. In addition to my first endeavor on the floor of a Parliament I have included a short analysis of the work of the Session under the caption of "A Socialist's Reaction to the Legislature," which I think you will find well worth your while to read.

HAROLD E. WINCH.

The Politics of a Derelict

M. R. SPEAKER, Honorable Members:

I presume that the majority of you are family men and, therefore, understand that it is the prerogative of a youngster to make itself heard. Admittedly, when a baby howls it sometimes does so without reason, but in the majority of cases there is some very good reason for the loud expression of their feelings.

I feel that you will agree that for the past two weeks I, as the baby of this Legislature, have been a very good baby, but now I consider it is time that I made myself heard, and that I have many very good reasons for so doing.

In the first instance let me be clearly understood; I have many friends sitting both on the Government benches and in the Opposition. Outside of these Legislative walls I have a great respect for these friends, but within the confines of this body that friendship ceases. As a Socialist, I look upon the Members gathered herein not as individuals, but as an expression of one system or another. Either they are here to maintain and administer the decadent system of Capitalism, or they are here with the avowed intention of eradicating that system and establishing a new economic order. The Members of the present Government represent a system irreconcilable with the proposed economic order sponsored by the Members of the official Opposition. These two systems, Capitalism and Socialism, are irreconcilable, and it of necessity follows that we as Members representing those two systems, stand unalterably opposed. We have no fight with the individual Members of this body, as individuals, but as the Members on the Government side stand to maintain the existing order, we will fight them tooth and nail until such time as the system they exemplify has been eradicated.

Mutual Admiration Society

I was elected by over eleven thousand voters in the constituency of Vancouver East to represent that riding in this, the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. I admit that I am somewhat bewildered and baffled by my two weeks' experience in this Assembly. I understood that the purpose for which I was elected was to come here and aid in the enacting of Legislation in the interests of the citizens of British Columbia. Instead of that; instead of finding myself in a Legislature gathered for that purpose, I seem to have wandered into a meeting of the mutual admiration society. Almost every speech delivered so far has been a case of "you pat my back and I'll pat yours." If the Honorable, the Prime Minister, and the Members of his Cabinet are one-tenth as wise and pure as they have been painted by the preceding speakers in reply to the Speech from the Throne, I feel sure that on their death, we will erect statues to their memory and call them Saints.

May I, at this time, record my strong objection to the ceremony used in the opening of this Legislature. At a time when the citizens of British Columbia are in dire need and the call is for some action tending towards the alleviation of their distress, this Legislative Body which has the power of legislating such necessary enactments, proceeds to business with pomp and majesty similar to the strutting of peacocks in a zoo. Moreover, I strenuously object to the display of the one great argument upon which all governments rest, that is the armed forces of the State. The entire proceedings at the opening of Parliament is a relic of the past. It is a tradition dating back several hundred years, and it was a sure sign that we could expect absolutely nothing from the new Liberal administration because, just as the new Government insisted on being loyal to the old traditional custom of the opening of Parliament, now useless and futile, so would they remain loyal to the old traditional customs of a decadent, dying economic system. In my opinion, the entire

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show on the opening day of this Legislature was put on for the sole purpose of giving the Members of this body a sense of their own importance, and of giving to the great mass of the people a warning as to their own insignificance.

When Do We Eat?

We, the Socialist Members of the Opposition, are out, not to reform, alleviate or palliate the existing order of society, but to completely abolish it. But we realize that this cannot be done in a day; we know that that which must be done immediately is to answer the despairing cry of thousands of the people of B.C., "When do we eat?" British Columbia is going through a crisis such as has never been known in her previous history. The people are in dire need. The supplying of the sustenance of life should be and must be our immediate concern. Knowing this full well, the C.O.F. Members, in order not to obstruct the present Government in bringing in the necessary legislation to supply the people with work and wages, offered to give up their prerogative of speaking on the Speech from the Throne so that this might be done. It was not a gesture for political purposes, nor was it just an offer, but the Honourable Leader of the Opposition made it a definite motion and we desired that the motion should go through; but apparently this was not the desire of the present Government. Before the election they spoke much of the immediate needs of the people and of the necessity for immediate action being taken in order that these needs might be filled. But now the election is over, the Liberals are in power with a vast brute majority. They have reached their objective and apparently now wish to talk and not to act. This was made decidedly clear by the Honourable Premier when, not being satisfied with saying "No" once to our motion, said it three times.

It is apparent that the present Government do not, or will not realize the state of affairs existing in British Columbia. I will, therefore, take a few moments to give them a synopsis of the situation.

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There are in B.C., 104,246 who are dependent upon direct relief. Under the scale for married men the average family is allowed \$20 per month for food and an additional 40 percent extra for clothing, shelter, light and fuel, making a total of \$28.00 per month, or \$336 a year. A man has to keep his family in all the necessities of life with only \$336. In referring to the January issue of the *Labor Gazette*, I find that for the first week in December the cost of the required amount of staple foods for the average family in British Columbia was \$8.22 weekly; fuel and light were \$2.85 weekly; rent \$5.57 weekly, plus 50 percent allowance for clothing and sundries. This gives the required amount needed for a living, of \$24.96 weekly, or \$1,297.92 per year according to the statistics of the Federal Government. This is the amount required if a man with an average family is to get by; yet on direct relief for the same period the same man received only \$336.

The Members of this House may theoretically be able to make these figures jibe, but they can take it from me, who has had nineteen months of practical experience on direct relief, it can't be done. Existing in a state hovering between life and death, too little to live on, too much to die on. After seeing the inactivity of the present Government for the past two weeks and through my knowledge of the dire necessity of those on direct relief, I have come to the conclusion that there should be an Act upon the statute books of this Province, that no man shall be allowed to run for the Legislative Assembly unless he has existed for two years upon direct relief. Perhaps then he would understand the needs of the mass of the people, and would take the required action to relieve the situation.

Next we have these slave compounds called "relief camps." Here are interned the unwanted, not needed, single youth of the Province. There are, at the present time, 7,869 single men in these camps in British Columbia. Here they receive work and wages—eight hours a day work, twenty cents a day wages. They are under the control of the department of National Defence; they are subject to rigid discipline and are subject to expulsion from the camp without trial, without an opportunity of present-

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ing their case, at the whim and pleasure of the camp foreman. Once so expelled from these camps, they have no court of appeal, no redress, nowhere to go--Derelicts. What a condition for the youth of this Province! Able to work, wanting to work, denied the opportunity; wanting to become useful, productive, self-respecting citizens of the community and destined to wander aimlessly, homeless and hungry throughout the length and breadth of this country of Canada, wealthiest in natural resources of the entire world.

There have been civilizations in the past, civilizations as great, if not greater than our own. These civilizations reached a stage in their development in which the economic system of the time could not, or would not, supply the sustenance of life to its citizens; reached a state at which the youth, the cream of the man-power of the citizenship were not wanted and not needed. These civilizations either had to make a radical change in their system of society, and move onward to newer and greater accomplishments or sink back into oblivion. We, in our present boasted Western Canadian civilization are at identically the same stage. We have reached that point in the development of our economic system in which the people of this country are not being supplied with the necessities and comforts of life, and the youth with their attributes of vim, vigor, fire, ambitions and desires, are being stifled and repressed. We have either to move ahead to a new economic basis of society or once again will a civilization recede into another dark age. Whether or not this takes place depends to a great extent upon the intelligence, sincerity and understanding of the administrators of the people's business.

Wages of the Working Masses

We need not deal only with the unemployed. On checking over Bulletin No. 31, of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1931, which is the latest available containing the information I desire, I note that there were in that year in British Columbia, 4,718 boys and 2,380 girls, of the age of 17 years and under, who were working, their average yearly wage being \$307 and \$265, respectively. Mere children who should be continuing their studies, preparing themselves for their future citizenship

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and enjoying what should be the most happy years of their lives. I find, on examination of this Bulletin, that the average yearly earnings of these from eighteen to nineteen years was \$455; twenty to twenty-four years inclusive, \$674; twenty to thirty-four years inclusive, \$898; thirty-five to forty-four years, \$1,047; forty-five to fifty-four years inclusive, \$1,034; fifty-five to sixty-four years inclusive, \$901; sixty-five to sixty-nine years inclusive, \$759; seventy and over, \$634. These were the average earnings for 1931.

In 1932, the average wage dropped 10.8 percent. I have not the available figures for 1933, but there was a corresponding drop in that year. It is almost safe to say that the average wage in 1933 was at least 20 percent less than those figures I have just mentioned. I would also draw to your attention that, of the wage earners in 1931 in British Columbia, there were 24,851 males and 2,199 females over the age of fifty-five years who were working. This in a so-called civilization; and if such a condition is allowed to continue, will be a disgrace to a government boasting that the meaning of modern Liberalism is safe and sane progress.

In this Bulletin are listed sixty-five occupations, of which I note that in only nineteen is there an income of over \$1000 per year, and the majority of these are between \$1000 and \$1100. I also note that of these sixty-five occupations mentioned, in thirteen the average yearly income is under \$600 per year. This was in 1931; I would like to be able to give the figures for the present time. The vital point to which I desire to draw your attention, is that over the whole range, from ten years to over seventy years of working life, in not one year do we find an average income as high as the \$1297.92 required for the maintenance of life by the average family. If this is not a terrible indictment of the existing system and the existing governments, then I would like to know what is.

But perhaps I am taxing the mentality of the Government in asking them to understand conditions existing outside of this building. Let me then show to you that the present administration does not even perceive injustices beneath their very nose,

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and within their power to right. A perusal of the Public Accounts Report shows me that there are Provincial employees working on a starvation wage. There are over fifty junior clerks in the Provincial Service, some of them married, who are receiving only from \$45 to \$60 per month. I note instances of junior clerks in the employ of the Government who have been here over a period of five years, who are still receiving the original \$45 per month at which they started.

What hope have the people of British Columbia of seeing the present Government fulfil their promise of "work and wages," when they do not give decent treatment to those over whom they have direct control? In the interest of economy, I presume, the Government does not see fit to increase the wages of these employees to a decent rate, and yet, in the name of Party Politics they can create new positions and pay high wages. They can appoint a Head to the Department of Industry at a salary of \$4000 per annum—a position which, for the past three years, I understand, has been filled by a part-time stenographer. They can appoint the Liberal Organizer to the position of Assistant to the Premier at a salary of \$3000 a year; and by the way, although he is now on the Government payroll he still retains his position as Party Organizer.

The \$7000 being paid to these two appointees of the Liberal Party, in the name of Party Patronage, would have been sufficient to have given every junior clerk in the employ of the Government a ten percent increase in wages!

Liberal "New Deal" Turns Out a "Raw Deal"

Before November 2nd, the people of this Province were demanding relief from their dire straits; they were demanding the immediate answer to their cry "When do we eat?"; they were calling for immediate action. The exponents of so-called modern Liberalism came out on a platform of a "New Deal." They maintained that the present economic system was fundamentally sound; that we had merely struck a slight defect in the economic system, and that, if returned to power, they knew the immediate remedy for the illness and would take immediate action to—in the words of Howard Coulter—"Lead the people

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of British Columbia down the golden middle road to the harbor which suits them best."

In order that the Honorable Members of this Legislature should not think that I am misquoting the statements or platform of that most "promising" Liberal Party, I would like to read from its official organ, the *Liberal Outlook*: "An indecisive result at the polls would mean further chaotic conditions, with log-rolling, dickering and bickering for personal advantage, and would mean months, if not years, of delay at tremendous cost. A Liberal administration, with leadership settled, will function immediately and assure same and stable government. Liberal policies will, at once, begin to lift us out of the depression and start us on the road to a new and lasting prosperity."

These words are not my words, but the words of the now Honorable Premier of this Province speaking at Victoria on October 18th!

May I quote again from another Liberal publication. These, too, are the words of the Premier of this Province: "If it be the will of the people that I should head a Government in this Province, I pledge an administration which will not surrender to pernicious influences, and that we shall call to our councils business interests, labor interests, and all the interests of this Province. Liberalism stands for the protection of life, liberty and the rights of all members of the community. It stands for the protection of the welfare of all, from the misuse of power by any particular group or class, and that the welfare of the community as a whole, shall dominate."

Honorable Premier, Members of the Cabinet and Members of the Government, I ask you to remember the words of the Honorable Premier, which I have just read, and then I say, do you not stand condemned when you voted us down on our motion to suspend all talk on the Speech from the Throne so that the Government could immediately bring in its policy of work and wages.

But your audacity did not stop even with that. With the people crying for bread, for work and wages, the Government introduced into this House, what apparently they considered

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the most vital legislation, an Act allowing them to fulfil a promise that one more Member should be elected into the Legislature. Then another Act introduced to take the power of appointing Agent-Generals out of the hands of the Legislature, the representatives of the people, and place it in the hands of the Executive Council,—for the purpose of Party Patronage, we presume. Not stopping even there, the Government introduced an Act annulling the Ladner Bridge,* and gave as reasons for the annulment of the bridge seven clauses why this bridge is not in the interests of the people of British Columbia, concluding with these words: "For this and other reasons arising from terms of the agreement adverse to the Government, the annulment so entered into is required for the public good." Then, immediately after the introduction of this bridge-annulling agreement, they have the nerve to introduce a new bill entitled "An Act to Amend the Fraser River Bridge Company Limited, Act of 1927," and the purpose of this Bill is to give into the hands of another private enterprise, evidently more in the favor of the present Government, the right to erect a toll bridge over the Fraser River, less than ten miles from the one they desire to cancel! Moreover, the introduction of this bridge is perhaps the greatest breach of trust to the citizens of this Province that has ever been committed in its history. The passing of this Act will mean the closing of the free public bridge now existing at New Westminster, and the re-routing of all traffic over a toll bridge.

This means that every individual, in every vehicle desiring to go from Vancouver and vicinity down to the American border, down to the summer resorts of the Vancouver citizens, or into the Fraser Valley, that district which is in the main the agricultural food supply of Vancouver, will have to pay their pound of flesh to the demands of private interests.

*This Act was later amended by the Government so that instead of annulling the original agreement, it gave the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council power to enter into a new agreement with the Ladner Bridge Co. The Fraser River Bridge Bill also passed, so we may now possibly see the strange sight of the closure of a free bridge, and the opening of two toll bridges within ten miles of one another.

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If this is the "new real of modern Liberalism," then all I can say is that this is the first time that I have seen the word "new" spelled R-A-W. It is a *raw* deal, not a new deal.

During the last election campaign, the Liberals barked much on the necessity for a labor code, on the necessity for reducing the hours of labor and of increasing the rate of wages. Working towards this direction, they introduced what they are pleased to call a *Male Minimum Wage Act*; which, presumably, is supposed to be for the protection of the worker. We do not question the sincerity of the Minister of Labor, who is undoubtedly one of the ablest men in the Liberal Cabinet. But every clause in that Act contains a joker, and the joker is in the interest of the employer and not of the employee. It is a stacked deck against the workers of this Province, for it contains a mass of loopholes through which the employing class can worm its way.

No act that has so far been proposed by the present Government shows any intention of bringing down their policy of work and wages. Every Act that has so far been proposed supposedly in the interests of the citizens of the Province, is an insult to their intelligence and to the trust placed in the present Government on November 2nd.

I feel that I can do no better than to quote to you words uttered by the Honorable the Premier some four months ago, when speaking in the Auditorium in Vancouver,—words which have scared their way into my brain; words which I will never forget; words which I will never let the Honorable Premier forget—*"By their works ye shall know them."* And I would like, here and now, to tell the Honorable Premier and the present Government, that I, Harold Winch, speaking not as a member of the Legislative Assembly but as a representative of the youth of this country and as a member of the working class of this Province, who understands and has felt the poverty and misery which is now prevalent, that on the basis of the Premier's own words—"By their works ye shall know them" and by their present activity and the signs of activity for the future, that *"We surely do!"*

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Government Helpless, Through Lack of Understanding, To Cope With the Situation

Not only have the present Government shown their absolute helplessness and inability to cope with the present situation by the introduction of their bills, but it has also been clearly shown by the various Members of the Government who have spoken to date. An analysis of their utterances will show that they have no grasp whatever of the job ahead of them; will show that they themselves know that they cannot do anything, *and do not intend to do anything.* The Honorable Member from Lillooet* gave us a marvelous mind-picture of the natural resources in the hinterland of British Columbia; he told us of the vast stores of coal, copper, gold and other minerals; he told us of the marvelous fertile soil and grazing lands, and asked that we put the youth of the Province to the development of these resources. I ask you, what for? Why produce more coal, more copper, more products of the soil, more lumber, when the present owners of the means of life cannot dispose of the tremendous accumulation of those same commodities which they now have?

I am indebted to my friend, the Honorable Member from South Okanagan† for the opportunity of listening to a marvelous, scientific address on what he has pleased to term "the chemical revolution." He explained to us all the marvelous scientific development that has gone on in the past few years, and showed how we barely scraped the surface in that direction. He told of the possibilities of making alcohol from apples, of sugar from wood, but he forgot to tell us what would happen to those individuals now engaged in the present method of producing alcohol and sugar, if the new method were applied. I have great hopes that in the very near future the Honorable Member for South Okanagan will come to the realization that the problem which we have to tackle is not a chemical nor a scientific problem, but an economic one. He himself, in his most illuminating address, gave the necessary proof of the fact, although he did not state it, that due to the technological ad-

*Mr. George Murray.

†Dr. Allan Harris.

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vincement of industry we would have to move ahead into a new order of society.

His argument can best be explained in this way: In old methods of society, agriculturists used horses to do their heavy work. But with technological advance there came into use sixteen-cylinder machines run by gas. With the aid of this improved method he increased his productive ability and brought into being more goods than he could dispose of under the existing capitalist system. Prices dropped, wages dropped, until he was unable to raise the price to buy the necessary gas to run his machine. Then what did he do? Find a way to distribute his goods so that he could get the necessary gas? No! He went back to his old system of horses, with this difference that he hitched them up to his sixteen-cylinder machine.

Now the Honorable Members for South Okanagan wants to make alcohol from apples; apples which the people of the prairies would rather eat if they only had the power to purchase; and with the alcohol thus obtained displace the gas as the motive power of the machine. What then is going to happen to all the gas now on hand, and to the men engaged in the production and handling of gas? More unemployment—that is all; and what of the man with the sixteen-cylinder machine? Well, it will not affect him at all, except that he will now hitch his horses to a should-be-alcohol-driven machine, instead of a should-be-gas-driven machine. In the economic field the world is doing the same thing as the farmer; to our highly productive mechanized system we are hitching a distributive system now outworn, when what we should be doing is using a distributive system adaptable to our productive system; and such is only possible under Socialism.

If my worthy friend from South Okanagan insists on continuing the Capitalist system, and desires to do something for his constituents, I would suggest to him that he try his hand at combating the cheap Japanese competition by crossing the silk-worm with that pest of a codling-moth that infests the fruit orchards of his locality.

I feel certain that as my worthy friend is a sincere, intelligent member of the community, in the very near future when

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he comes to a realization of the job ahead of him we will find him in our own ranks.

The Honorable Second Member for Vancouver-Burrard² came very near to giving us a serious indictment of the present system. She told us how in the past the children went to school oftentimes suffering from contagious diseases. She boasted of the fact that today we make a special feature of physical education and the health of the children. This was applauded by the Honorable Members of the Government; and yet, they have nothing to applaud. By referring to the twenty-second report of the Medical Inspection of Schools we find that of 103,412 school children examined, 72,822 cases were reported as suffering from malnutrition, defective vision, defective hearing, defective breathing, adenoids, enlarged tonsils, defective teeth, enlarged glands, goitre, and other conditions. I would draw to your attention that defective adenoids, tonsils, teeth, glands and goitre are the direct result of malnutrition, which is, in turn, a result of the depression which is caused by the inherent working out of our present economic system. Members of the Government should not applaud their efforts, but rather should weep.

We have heard much in the past two weeks about a planned economy, but not one of the Government's speakers has shown to us how they intend to plan. In a planned economy there are only two things possible: either you increase consumption, or curtail production. Under the Capitalist system it is impossible to increase consumption because you will not or cannot place sufficient purchasing power into the hands of the great mass of the people. This means the only planning you can do and still maintain our present economic system is to curtail production. A glance at the rest of the world will show you that this is the course that is being followed. In Germany, the use of machinery has been forbidden in certain trades. Mussolini enacted a law in January, 1933, whereby the erection of new or the extension of existing plants must only be undertaken with the sanction of the Government.

*Mrs. Paul Smith.

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The Roosevelt administration intends to see that no increase in productive machinery of the great corporations shall be made without its specific approval.

The scientist such as my friend, Dr. Harris, conserves and increases production. The Capitalist exploiter wastes it, and the more universal the Government's plan, the more complete is the stoppage of industrial advances.

The Government themselves know that they are unable to do anything under the existing regulations, and yet still insist on retaining true and loyal to outworn traditions, customs and economic systems. This was admitted by no less an authority than the Honorable the Minister of Labor*, who, in an address to the young Liberals in Victoria some few weeks ago, discussed some of the problems of Government. He stated that "while having the fullest sympathy with the plea of the people, the Government's hands were sometimes tied by rules, and they cannot do that which should be done." Why are they not honest and admit that they are beaten, and join with us in abolishing these old rules, regulations and systems, the continuation of which means the continuance of misery, want and degradation.

Capitalism Has Outlived Its Usefulness

The present system has outlived its usefulness; it has served the purpose for which it came into being, that is to answer the age-old problem of man, and bring into being a productive system that would guarantee to all the people the ability of producing the necessities and comforts of life for all time. That has now been accomplished. We have a super-abundance of everything required in order that we might live a life worth living, but because we insist on refusing to carry the economic system through to its logical conclusion and find a method of distributing the products of our highly productive system, the citizens of society have to spend their time in perpetual want. We, of the C.C.F., maintain that the Capitalistic system has ceased to function.

* Mr. Pearson.

Many may say that the present depression is a temporary defect in the system, just a gear out of place, and that one of these days prosperity will turn the corner and the good old times will be with us once more. An unbiased survey of the entire range of the Capitalist system will show that this is impossible. There is only one possible way to overcome our difficulties and bring permanent prosperity, and that is by the setting up of an economic system on an altogether different basis to the existing one. The present order is marked by glaring inequalities of wealth and opportunity. In an age of abundance it condemns the great mass of the people to poverty and insecurity. Chaotic waste and instability is the order of the day. We are convinced that these evils of Capitalism can be removed only in a planned and socialized economy in which our natural resources and means of production and distribution are owned, controlled and operated by the people; that is, in a Socialist system of society. Call it the Co-operative Commonwealth, if you like, but they both mean the same; both are based on a system of society in which the basic principle regulating production, distribution and exchange is the supplying of human needs and not the making of profit.

C.C.F. Not Obstructionists

We do not desire that you should think that we are here merely as critics. We are not. We are here in the interest of the mass of the people, to legislate toward the betterment of their condition. We are not in the position of power, and so in order that something may be done immediately towards alleviation of conditions in this Province, we offer to the Government our knowledge of the steps required.

The Honorable first Member for Burrard* was quite correct when he said that "Condemnation was not alone sufficient to build a sound political economy." It is to be regretted that after giving voice to such a truthful statement, the Honorable Member did not carry on and give us constructive suggestions as to the immediate steps required. He is, however, apparently

* Mr. G. G. McGeer, K.C.

laboring under the fallacious supposition that banking reform can alter our social structure. His education has not yet reached that stage where he can understand that it is time for us to deal with fundamentals; and the fundamental cause of the present crisis in society is not banking or bankers, but that private ownership of means of life gives to a few, economic power over the lives of the many.

My Honorable friend is a master of the art of repartee and stone-throwing. But I would remind him of the old saying that "Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones." We of the C.C.F. do not claim to be infallible or to know it all. Neither does my learned friend know it all. This is clearly shown when he makes such a statement as he made on Friday last, to the effect that "Prosperity is not around the corner." Prosperity is around the corner. The point that he and the Members of the Government do not understand is that the corner around which prosperity is hiding is the same corner around which you will find Socialism. How are we going to turn this corner into prosperity? In presenting an outline of possible Legislation to cope with present problems we have to remember that in the earliest stages of the period of transition to the new economic order there is a temporary continuance of the ordinary methods of capitalist economy. There is a mixture of old and new, with the old gradually receding as the new ideas and methods are brought into vogue.

We have to accept the necessary premise that the Government are elected into power with the conscious, deliberate and solid support of a substantial majority of the voters. Meaning by that, that the Government can rely upon the electors to support them in their actions. In a pamphlet entitled "A Brief Synopsis of Liberal Policy" written by the Honorable Premier in August, 1933, we find this paragraph:

"The Liberal Party exists as an official organization for the purpose of formulating and furthering measures that will make for the well-being of each individual member of society, and the welfare of society as a whole."

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This, of necessity, means challenging the authority and control of vested interests. How are we going about this challenge? and what are the immediate steps this Government can take for the alleviation of present distress; and tending towards the establishment of a new order of society?

As I analyze the situation there is immediate action required along certain lines. The unemployed in the Relief Camps and on Direct Relief must be given useful and productive labor at the remuneration essential to a decent standard of living. How is this going to be accomplished?

Immediate Transitional Steps

(1) We must prevent unemployment increasing. Consequently children must be prevented from leaving school until provision has been made for them in a useful, social activity. The leaving-school age must be entirely removed, and only those permitted to leave who have a definite position to go to. Of course, the burden of supporting these children could not be left on the shoulders of the parents, but must be borne by the State. An age limit would have to be set, over which a grant would be allowed by the Province for the care of the Youth. We have to supply maintenance to the Youth who are on the streets: would it not be better to supply maintenance and keep them at their educational studies?

Immediately arises the need for additional school accommodation, a necessity to supply which nothing would give us greater pleasure, satisfaction and ultimate returns. A big school building program would create a revival of industries supplying construction needs. Education should, of course, be wholly within the administration of the Province, and the teachers should automatically acquire the status of civil servants.

(2) All persons engaged in Government or municipal activities would be compulsorily superannuated (except in very exceptional cases) at the age of 55. Not only so as to assure them a period of assured leisure during the evening time of their lives, but also to provide vacancies and opportunities for the Youth now unemployed.

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(c) Organization of the unemployed Youth in Labor Battalions. Not for the purpose of militarization, but to co-ordinate and intensify all branches of technical education in order to qualify these young men to participate in social production.

Under this heading we would have various subdivisions, such as Mining, Industry, Agriculture, and Forestry.

(a) *Mining.* After a thorough grounding in Mineralogy and Geology these young men would go out under the supervision of practical men and make a mineral survey of British Columbia. They would report their findings to the Government which would then have a knowledge as to our mineral resources, and would develop them as socially owned enterprises, as the need arose to fill the requirements of the people.

(b) *Forestry.* Those interested in Forestry would make their studies, their survey and report in a similar way. They would also work out and place in operation a plan for scientific logging and reforestation, and would build the necessary trails for forest protection.

This same general outline would also be followed as regards our fisheries.

(c) *Agriculture.* The Government should immediately establish co-operatively operated farms for experimental purposes, and to demonstrate to the farmers that only by such scientific farming can their living be assured upon an economically sound basis. The products of the soil thus produced would be used by the Government in supplying the requirements of their survey parties, study groups, and industrial enterprises. Voluntary co-operative activities should be instituted and fostered, and all assistance possible given to those desiring to start with such projects.

(d) *Industry.* There are many industries on the verge of bankruptcy, or already closed down. The Government must not be a savior to these "devoted" industries, but should take them over at their intrinsic value and operate them in the interest of

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the people, and for the supplying of clothing, essentials and equipment to their crews and socially-owned enterprises. Let it be understood that at this stage of the transitional period the Government is not to enter the competitive market, but merely supply their own workmen, industrial projects, and those dependent on the State for support. Under this heading I would include the tearing down of city slums, and their rebuilding with modern houses and apartments, to be rented or sold at cost plus depreciation charges, to the workmen of the Province. The men employed to be taken off the present direct relief and out of the relief camps.

Now I can just imagine what the Honorable Minister of Finance is thinking about: This all sounds very nice, but how are you going to finance it?

First of all you would have available the funds which are being distributed on direct relief.

Secondly there would have to be instituted taxation on ability to pay. A steeply graduated income tax, and heavy succession duties.

Thirdly, the Province would have to enter into and eventually control all lines of insurance—Life, Fire, and Health. Here is a marvelously profitable field of endeavor. As an example of how it could work, may I give as an illustration the town of Salmon Arm. I am given to understand by one who has made a study of it, that the difference between the amount paid for fire insurance premiums and the amount paid for fires on those policies, is more than the total amount of taxes paid into the City Treasury. In other words, under State-controlled Fire Insurance, the Province could insure against fire, pay fire claims, charge no municipal taxes,—and all for the price of the present policy charge for fire insurance!

I would advise the Honorable Minister of Finance to make an exhaustive survey of this field with the purpose of devising means of balancing his budget.

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*Major Steps Required in Order to Attain to the
Co-operative Commonwealth*

Speaking generally, the jobs we have to commence tackling here and now are: the Socialization of Ownership, the Socialization of Finance, the development of a Labor Code, and a more equitable method of taxation.

(1) *The Socialization of Finance.* We must, as quickly as possible, socialize all the financial machinery, banking, currency and credit, in order to make possible the effective control of currency and credit that they may be utilized in the interests of the people. Admittedly, this is not within the power of the Provincial Parliament, but we can make a strong representation to the Federal House in this direction.

(2) *Social Ownership.* We must immediately take steps towards the socialization of all means of production, distribution and services essential to human needs, and then operate them for the benefit of the citizens of Canada. We can take steps in this direction here in the Province of British Columbia. The Government should be devising ways and means of acquiring control of the natural resources of this Province, which are the heritage of the people of this Province, and should be safeguarded for posterity. They should also be taking steps toward the acquiring of the ownership of all public utilities and Provincial industries.

(3) *Labor Code.* A Labor Code which comes within the power of this Province, should be immediately brought into force; not such a labor code as has been introduced by this Liberal administration, but one aimed to secure for the worker, maximum income and leisure; and insurance covering illness, accident, old age and unemployment. How would these be financed? That is covered by the fourth step.

(4) *Taxation.* A taxation policy designed to lessen the glaring inequalities of income and to provide funds for social services and the socialization of industry. I note in the platform of the Liberal Party, that "The Taxation structure must be

revised with a view to reduction wherever possible, including exemption in the lower scale of wages and salaries."

I shall be very interested when the Honorable Minister of Finance* brings down his budget, to see if he has followed the principle of Modern Liberalism, that taxation shall be based upon ability† to pay!

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion may I say that no C.C.F. Government, no C.C.F. Opposition will rest content until it has eradicated Capitalism and brought into operation the full programme of socialized planning such as will lead into the establishment in Canada of a co-operative commonwealth; and, Honorable Premier, "*By our works ye shall know us.*"

*Mr. J. Hart.

†The budget brought down some three weeks later by the Hon. Minister of Finance disclosed the fact that there was to be no increase in taxation on the higher brackets of incomes.

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A Socialist's Reaction to the Legislature

IT MAY be of interest to the reader of this pamphlet if we carry on for a page or two and give a Socialist's reaction to the Legislature on his first sitting in that Hall of Fame, Victoria, that fair city on Vancouver Island at which the Provincial Parliament meets in session, is the Mecca to which all refined Englishmen expect to go before they die. The prevailing accent is a combination of Oxford and Chinook, and it is hopeless to run for office unless your ancestors came over in the same canoe as Sir James Douglas. The principal importations are Generals and Colonels on half pay; and journalists and legislators who come from all parts of the Province in order to escape from their editors and constituents. The equable climate is largely due to the hot air which emanates from the dome of the Parliament Buildings.

The present Premier is a would-be-dictator by the name of Pattullo, who took one look at his followers and decided with a bunch like that his only hope lay in a dictatorship. Not knowing what to do in the present emergency, he decided he needed absolute power to do it. His brain trust is still busily engaged in hatching out a policy, but from all indications it will be called the *Beer Deal*, and its symbol will be a Turkey Buzzard, clutching in one claw the natural resources of the country while with the other it hurls thunderbolts at Gerry McGeer, R. B. Bennett, and the C.C.F.

But I am getting rather ahead of the story. Let us start from the beginning.

The strange environment—the early realization of the waste of time and effort—the sensing that not half-a-dozen of the Members outside your own group are mentally capable of grasping the social concept from which you analyze the system in general or the individual problems as they arise—the fact early

becomes evident that the Government side will vote solidly on every question, although you know from personal contact that many disagree and would like to express their individual views.

Three weeks of useless talking in reply to the Speech from the Throne; reports filed by various departments; drafts of Bills submitted by the Government, or Members presenting them on behalf of corporations or individuals. The depressing, deadening effect of waiting, waiting, waiting to do that which you came here to do, and the realization that as a minority you could not do it.

Despite all this, every day is full of activity; ever-increasing correspondence from individuals to whom additional relief, a pension adjustment, or a local grievance is of vital importance; delegations present their views for or against particular issues to be brought before the House; Departments to visit for information or adjustment of local difficulties—and through it all a nervous tension as though the fate of the world were resting upon your shoulders. All sensed that supporters and opponents alike were expecting great things of us; impossible accomplishments because we were but a mere handful of pioneer standard-bearers—the advance guard of the irresistible forces of the tomorrow which alone could perform the herculean task of transforming an economic social system, the present beneficiaries of which, realizing that their citadel was being attacked, were determined not to concede one inch for fear that it might ultimately lead to final surrender.

Numerous amendments were moved by the C.C.F. Members, to the Male Minimum Wage Act, the Economic Council Act, the Chiropractic Act, and the Special Powers Act. Despite hours of strenuous argument by the Socialists, only one or two minor proposals were accepted, although extensions of the original Bills were brought in by the Government along some of the lines advocated by the workers' representatives.

The Special Powers Act is the dynamite of the Legislative proceedings. Herein lies all that Capitalism stands for—full power to the Cabinet to deal with any and all natural resources

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and assets of the Province in any way they deem fit—to abolish all civil and property rights—to impose punishment for anything considered detrimental to the interests of Capitalism—to abolish any existing legislation and enact new laws at their sole will and pleasure. This Act clears the road for straight, unadulterated Fascism. Within this Act lies all the powers that the most ruthless Hitlerite could desire or use. This Act demonstrates that Capitalism will, without hesitation, abolish every medium by which the New Social Order could be obtained by so-called constitutional means; that revolution itself is only unconstitutional when it fails, success by that very fact makes it constitutional.

Let us face the facts. The Government asks, to quote the Act, that property and civil rights in this Province shall be handed over to them together with the power to impose by "fine, penalty or imprisonment" upon any citizen who objects to their ownership of his property or civil rights. Nothing in feudal days exceeded this power of hanging, drawing and quartering the serf if it so pleased his lord and master. The so-called saving clause is a joke. Note this: "If any ordinance is varied, extended, or revoked, neither the previous operation thereof nor anything duly done thereunder shall be affected thereby."

In the present crisis, the Special Powers Act of Premier Pattullo is significant of the intensity of the "struggle for power" that characterizes this phase of dying Capitalism. The Premier may swear till he is blue in the face that he does not intend a dictatorship. Yet we know that Capitalism, which his party represents, is digging in, and entrenching itself behind just such legislation in every country where its power is threatened by the rising tide of Socialism. We know that Capitalism is the same thing in British Columbia as it is in Germany, or Italy, or Austria. It always acts, when threatened, in exactly the same manner. It throws aside the guise of parliamentary procedure and reveals itself as a dictatorship based upon the power of the State as represented by the Law, backed by the police force, the army, and the navy.

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To return to our analysis of the Legislature. The net outcome of the first Session is a clear realization that parliamentary action is useless of itself without a majority--that the real work of the Socialist representatives lies throughout the community educating the people to a correct understanding of Capitalism and the New Social Order which must supersede it--that the keenest and most searching selection must be made of available material before selecting candidates who, if successful, must immediately become propagandists and organizers. Unless they have these qualities based upon a sound understanding of Marxian principles with a willingness to devote their whole time to this work they are useless under the stress of present conditions. The issue of revolutionary socialism versus capitalism must ever be kept clearly defined. *Only to those in whom the workers have absolute confidence dare their support be given.*